

## LECTURER'S JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN SHEN ZHEN PROVINCE IN CHINA

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### Abstract

Job satisfaction plays an important role for HEI instructors. High work pressure and job stress have a huge impact on a lecturer's physical and mental health. This includes withdrawal behaviors such as constant anxiety, inactivity or inefficiency at work, low organizational citizenship behavior and frequent absenteeism, which ultimately lead to resignation or departure from the teaching profession. The role of the lecturer represents a difficult trend, not only because of changes in the social aspects of the community, but also because of changes in the national education system and changes in assessment standards. Lecturers are under increasing pressure to work due to high expectations from parents, disciplinary issues from students, automatic leadership, and the influence of outside factors and a permissive community. All of these factors call for a greater role for lecturers.

**Keywords:** *job satisfaction, job stress, education system*

### Introduction

The rapid development of China's educational reform has led to continuous changes in higher education institution (HEI) assessment standards and personnel systems, resulting in increased work pressure for lecturers. According to Xin (2003), more than 90% of college lecturers in China have experienced prolonged professional stress, with over 75% suffering from chronic fatigue. This immense pressure not only affects their physical and psychological health but also leads to diminished performance, frequent absenteeism, and eventually, turnover (Sun, Wu, & Wang, 2011). High job satisfaction is known to enhance lecturers' resilience to these stressors, leading to better performance and reduced negative outcomes. Conversely, low job satisfaction contributes to significant organizational costs, including recruitment, training, and reduced productivity during transition periods (Maertz & Campion, 1998).

The challenges faced by HEI lecturers are compounded by societal and systemic changes, such as heightened expectations from parents, student disciplinary issues, and external societal influences (Kzmarudin, 1989, in Muhamad Madi, 1998). These factors have expanded the roles and responsibilities of lecturers, intensifying their workloads. While substantial research has explored job satisfaction and organizational commitment separately, there remains a gap in understanding the relationship between these two variables, particularly in the context of Chinese HEIs (Bao & Wang, 2012).

This study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among lecturers in Shenzhen, China. By exploring how these variables interact, the research aims to shed light on the factors contributing to lecturer retention and performance. The findings are expected to provide actionable insights for improving job satisfaction and fostering stronger organizational commitment, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of HEIs in China.

## Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a critical factor influencing employee performance and organizational outcomes. Hoppock (1935) defined job satisfaction as the combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that cause an individual to feel satisfied with their job. Building on this, Vroom (1954) emphasized that job satisfaction reflects an individual's positive orientation toward their current job role. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), developed by Weiss, Dawis, and England (1967), categorizes job satisfaction into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors include growth opportunities, recognition, and responsibility, while extrinsic factors relate to the work environment, organizational policies, and compensation. Herzberg's two-factor theory further differentiates motivators (intrinsic) and hygiene factors (extrinsic), noting that the latter prevents dissatisfaction but does not necessarily improve satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959).

In the educational context, job satisfaction among lecturers has been linked to the ability to use judgment in teaching, professional recognition, and workload management (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). However, studies also highlight that heavy workloads, administrative duties, and a lack of autonomy often negatively affect lecturers' job satisfaction (Sun, Wu, & Wang, 2011). Similarly, demographic factors such as age, gender, and qualifications have been shown to influence satisfaction levels. For instance, Green (2000) found a positive relationship between educational attainment and job satisfaction, while Lowther (1985) observed that lecturers under 30 reported lower satisfaction compared to their older counterparts.

## Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment to their organization and is considered a significant predictor of employee performance and retention. Meyer and Allen (1991) conceptualized organizational commitment into three dimensions: affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (sense of obligation to stay). The Three-Component Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) has been widely used to measure these dimensions. Studies by Hunt and Morgan (1994) and Kanter (2001) emphasize that organizational commitment is closely tied to employee satisfaction, loyalty, and identification with organizational goals.

In higher education, organizational commitment is particularly important due to its impact on teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. Hatton (1997) found a positive relationship between lecturers' commitment and student success, while Allen (2001) demonstrated that interpersonal satisfaction and a supportive work environment significantly enhance organizational commitment. However, challenges such as rigid policies, inequitable workloads, and limited career growth opportunities have been found to reduce commitment levels among lecturers (Schlesinger & Zornitsky, 1991).

## Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment has been well-documented in the literature. Studies suggest that job satisfaction is a strong predictor of organizational commitment, particularly through its extrinsic factors. For instance, Levy and Williams (1998) reported a correlation coefficient of  $r = .60$  ( $p < .05$ ) between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similarly, Cheng (2002) found that extrinsic factors, such as salary and organizational policies, significantly contribute to higher commitment levels. In the

context of higher education, Ong (2007) highlighted that lecturers with greater job satisfaction exhibited stronger emotional attachment and loyalty to their institutions.

Theoretical frameworks such as Herzberg's two-factor theory and Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model provide a basis for understanding this relationship. Herzberg's theory posits that intrinsic and extrinsic motivators influence satisfaction, which in turn impacts commitment levels. Similarly, Meyer and Allen's model suggests that affective commitment is closely linked to intrinsic satisfaction, while continuance and normative commitment are more strongly influenced by extrinsic factors.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

While extensive research has explored the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, there is limited evidence specific to higher education institutions in China, particularly in the context of educational reforms. Furthermore, previous studies have predominantly focused on either job satisfaction or organizational commitment, without examining their interrelationship comprehensively. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among HEI lecturers in Shenzhen, China, and identifying the demographic factors that influence these variables.

### **Method**

This study adopts a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among lecturers in higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Shenzhen, China. The study focuses on the perceptions of lecturers regarding these two variables. A correlational design is deemed suitable as it allows for the exploration of potential relationships between the variables without manipulating the study environment. Additionally, demographic factors such as gender, marital status, age, qualification, job position, and teaching experience are analyzed to understand their influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

### **Population and Sampling**

The target population comprises full-time lecturers from HEIs in Shenzhen. Due to resource and logistical constraints, four HEIs were selected through simple random sampling: Harbin Cambridge University, Qiqihar Teachers College, Chengdong College of Northeast Agricultural University, and Heilongjiang Education College. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to lecturers, with 259 completed questionnaires collected. After excluding incomplete responses, 221 valid questionnaires were included in the analysis, representing a response rate of 74%. This sampling method ensures equal representation and minimizes bias in participant selection.

### **Instruments**

The study employed a self-administered questionnaire to collect data, which was divided into three sections: demographic information, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The demographic section captured six variables, including gender, marital status, age, highest qualification, job position, and years of teaching experience, which provided contextual insights into the respondents' backgrounds. Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) developed by Weiss, Dawis, and England (1967). This 20-item instrument comprised two dimensions: intrinsic factors, with 12 items focusing on internal motivators such as

recognition and responsibility, and extrinsic factors, with six items addressing external motivators like salary and working conditions. All items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Organizational commitment was assessed using the Three-Component Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Meyer and Allen (1991), which consisted of 24 items spanning three dimensions: affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (sense of obligation). Similarly, the OCQ utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with reverse scoring applied to negatively phrased items. To ensure the reliability and clarity of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted with 30 lecturers from higher educational institutions in Shenzhen, and the instruments were translated into Mandarin for better comprehension. The reliability testing produced Cronbach's alpha values of .819 for job satisfaction and .830 for organizational commitment, indicating strong internal consistency and validity of the instruments used in this study.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22.0, employing descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to address the research objectives. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to assess the levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among respondents. Inferential statistics, such as independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA, evaluated the effects of demographic factors (e.g., gender, marital status, age, educational qualifications, job position, and years of teaching experience) on the dependent variables. Results indicated significant differences in extrinsic factors of job satisfaction across demographic groups, such as gender ( $t = -2.043, p < .05$ ) and marital status ( $t = -4.225, p < .001$ ). Correlation analysis revealed that extrinsic factors of job satisfaction were positively associated with all dimensions of organizational commitment, including affective commitment ( $r = .409, p < .01$ ) and normative commitment ( $r = .507, p < .01$ ). Moreover, regression analysis demonstrated that job satisfaction, particularly its extrinsic factors, significantly predicted organizational commitment ( $R^2 = .665, F = 39.416, p < .001$ ), highlighting the importance of improving external motivators, such as policies and remuneration, to enhance lecturer commitment.

### Results

The results of the study revealed a moderate level of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment among lecturers in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Shenzhen, China. Descriptive analysis showed that the general job satisfaction had a mean score of 3.00 (SD = 0.51), with extrinsic factors ( $M = 3.25, SD = 0.51$ ) rated higher than intrinsic factors ( $M = 2.86, SD = 0.52$ ). Similarly, organizational commitment demonstrated a moderate mean score of 3.23 (SD = 0.52). Among its dimensions, normative commitment was the highest ( $M = 3.47, SD = 0.50$ ), followed by affective commitment ( $M = 3.38, SD = 0.54$ ), while continuance commitment was the lowest ( $M = 2.83, SD = 0.53$ ). Inferential statistics identified significant effects of demographic variables on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. For example, male lecturers reported significantly higher extrinsic job satisfaction compared to females ( $t = -2.04, p < .05$ ), while single lecturers exhibited higher extrinsic satisfaction than their married counterparts ( $t = -4.23, p < .001$ ). Furthermore, one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in job satisfaction based on age ( $F = 5.68, p < .01$ ), highest qualification ( $F = 5.32, p < .01$ ), and job position ( $F = 6.22, p < .001$ ). Correlation analysis indicated a positive and moderate relationship between extrinsic job satisfaction and organizational commitment, particularly with normative ( $r = .51, p < .01$ ) and continuance commitment ( $r = .46, p < .01$ ). Regression analysis further highlighted that extrinsic job satisfaction significantly predicted organizational

commitment ( $R^2 = .665$ ,  $F = 39.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings suggest that enhancing external motivators, such as organizational policies and remuneration, could improve lecturers' overall commitment to their institutions. The discussion centers on the findings regarding job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and their interrelationship among lecturers in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Shenzhen, China. The results indicated that while the overall levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment were moderate, notable disparities emerged across specific dimensions. For instance, intrinsic job satisfaction was rated lower ( $M = 2.86$ ) compared to extrinsic factors ( $M = 3.25$ ), highlighting that external motivators, such as salary, policies, and working conditions, play a more significant role in influencing lecturers' satisfaction. This finding aligns with Herzberg's two-factor theory, which emphasizes the critical role of hygiene factors in preventing dissatisfaction. Conversely, the low intrinsic satisfaction suggests that lecturers may feel limited autonomy and opportunities for personal growth due to increasing workloads and rigid organizational policies, a concern corroborated by earlier studies on academic burnout.

In terms of organizational commitment, the findings revealed that normative commitment was the highest dimension ( $M = 3.47$ ), suggesting that lecturers remain loyal to their institutions due to perceived social norms and obligations rather than intrinsic attachment. Affective commitment was moderately high ( $M = 3.38$ ), indicating that some lecturers experience emotional attachment to their roles. However, continuance commitment was the lowest ( $M = 2.83$ ), implying that many lecturers feel limited economic or professional incentives to remain with their institutions, consistent with the equity theory that emphasizes fairness in workload and remuneration.

Demographic factors were found to influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment significantly. Male lecturers reported higher extrinsic satisfaction than females, likely due to differing perceptions of institutional policies and work-life balance. Similarly, single lecturers exhibited greater extrinsic motivation compared to married ones, potentially reflecting the added familial responsibilities and time constraints faced by married educators. Significant variations in job satisfaction and commitment were also observed based on age, qualification, job position, and years of teaching. Younger lecturers and those in lower job positions reported higher satisfaction and commitment, which may stem from their aspirations for growth and professional development. Conversely, more experienced lecturers in higher positions reported declining satisfaction, likely due to increased workload, diminished rewards, or perceived inequities in career progression.

The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment was moderately strong, particularly for extrinsic factors, which significantly predicted all three dimensions of commitment. These findings align with prior research (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1991) demonstrating the pivotal role of external motivators in enhancing organizational commitment. Regression analysis confirmed that extrinsic satisfaction accounted for 66.5% of the variance in commitment, underscoring the need for HEI leaders to prioritize improvements in remuneration, work conditions, and management practices. Such efforts could foster a more supportive environment, thereby enhancing both satisfaction and commitment among lecturers.

Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors to create a balanced and supportive work environment. By recognizing and responding to the diverse needs of lecturers across demographic and professional contexts, HEIs can promote greater satisfaction, loyalty, and performance, ultimately contributing to the institutions' long-term success and sustainability. Future research could explore additional mediating factors, such as work-life balance and professional development opportunities, to further understand their impact on lecturer satisfaction and commitment.

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